



WWTF Workgroup Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2012 9:30 AM

Workgroup Members Present: Ray Mayo (City of La Porte), Leonard Levine (GCWDA), David Van Riper (City of Galveston), and Charlene Bohanon (GBF)

Discussion

Implementation Plan: Charlene updated the workgroup that the final draft of the I-Plan is in a waiting stage right now and that there is no new work to be done on it by the workgroups at this point. She will update the group as things progress. The next step for communicating the plan in the project area is for Charlene to meet individually with superintendents/operators from each of the facilities in the project area that are not a part of the workgroup and start building a relationship with them. This idea came out of a meeting in March with Kim Laird and Leonard Levine. Charlene is currently working to identify the proper contacts at each facility.

Management Measures: *(See below for refresher on a portion of the recommended measures in the I-Plan draft.)*

Training classes – The workgroup discussed initial plans for holding a one hour bacteria training at the Gulf coast region monthly operator meeting (3rd Monday of the month) and a 3-4 hour TEEX short course. Charlene will coordinate with David and Raul for the one hour training, as well as to give a presentation at another monthly meeting to make operators aware of the Oyster Waters I-Plan project. The workgroup decided that it would be best to aim for a TEEX short course in August in order to avoid conflicts with regional spring training sessions, as well as holidays. Charlene is in contact with TEEX and they think they can provide a trainer free of charge for us. David will contact Susie about using the League City Civic Center as a venue and with his vendor contacts to be possible sponsors for refreshments. Ray will also contact his vendors about being sponsors once more details are solidified. Vendors who sponsor will be given the opportunity to setup an info table to advertise their products/services. The key for this short course to be well-attended is for it to be offered for free and with CEU credits. This course will be advertised through TWUA, WEAT, TXAWWA, TCEQ, GBF and workgroup contacts.

Pre-permit renewal sampling letter – Charlene will begin a draft of the letter and submit it to the workgroup and TCEQ for review. In the meantime, she is working to compile a distribution list. Workgroup members suggested that TCEQ is the best source for this information.

Guidance document – Charlene asked the workgroup for help in gauging the level of detail and length that they recommended for the bacteria guidance document. They decided that a 3 – 4 page document, as well as a one page summary would be a good goal to start with. They emphasized the importance of keeping it brief so that more people would be likely to read it. Ray felt that having TCEQ's name on it would also help with that. The workgroup felt that the primary emphasis should be on proper sampling procedures and encouraging/giving recommendations for creating a monitoring plan as early as possible before the bacteria permit requirement is issued. The secondary emphasis should be on common problems with disinfection modes that could be causing bacteria exceedances (i.e. UV light maintenance, etc.). Leonard recommended talking to Gerald Landis about GCWDA's sampling procedure in

order to create a basic framework in the guidance document. The workgroup also recommended talking to TCEQ labs for examples. They emphasized the fact that sampling plans are going to vary greatly between facilities so keeping it general is important.

Next meeting: May 31st, 9:30am

- Goal for next meeting is to finalize plans for the training classes, review the pre-permit renewal sampling letter and follow up on the guidance document.

Management Measure 1.1: Guidance and Training

Proper bacterial monitoring requires the mastery of unique sample collection and handling techniques beyond those used for all other water quality parameters tested at WWTFs. In order to increase local waters attainment of oyster waters use in the Upper Gulf Coast, it is imperative that the owners and operators of WWTFs receive the training and guidance necessary to sample bacteria properly, and that they have the right equipment. If problems exist in the sampling process, they must have the knowledge to be able to solve them as quickly as possible.

Currently, very little training or guidance is given to the permittees as they renew their permits and begin sampling for bacteria. The WWTF Workgroup believes it is important to assist with the renewal process and to guide permittees through the new procedures for sampling bacteria. Because permit renewals have already begun to take place with the new bacteria standards, it is recommended that a high priority be placed on training permittees immediately. The goal is to reach as many permittees as possible before their permits need to be renewed. Once the renewals have taken place, then new facilities in the area would become the focus. The WWTF Workgroup will work with the TCEQ to develop a guidance document for WWTF operators. The WWTF will then request that the TCEQ consider distributing this document with permit renewal documents. The guidance document should include an explanation of why the bacteria sampling is important, sampling techniques, equipment needs and changes, as well as resources and mentors that facilities can turn to for guidance and mentorship. Additionally, a webpage on GBF's website will be established with resources for the owners/operators. The laboratories that process the samples should also communicate best practices for sample collection with the operators.

Management Measure 1.2: Pre-Permit Renewal Sampling

Dischargers will be encouraged to sample and test for bacteria before their actual permit renewal to ensure the facility is in compliance. Sampling early will give the facility time to make the necessary repairs before they receive a permit limit for bacteria, thus reducing their bacteria inputs to the UGCOW sooner. It also allows the samplers to perfect their collection technique. During this pre-permitted phase, bacteria samples are not reportable and EnviroMentors can assist the permittees with any problems that arise from the early testing.

The WWTF Workgroup will send a letter to the superintendent or the operator (whoever signs the report) of each of the facilities in the TMDL area, 18 months prior to their permit renewal to encourage them to test early, to explain why the testing is important, and to offer assistance if necessary. The same letter should be sent again 6 months before renewal as a reminder. The information will also be sent to the officers of each operator's associations within the TMDL area to present at a monthly meeting.